

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/987,486

Examiner

Liang-che Alex Wang

Applicant(s)

KATAYAMA ET AL.

Art Unit

2155

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to amendment filed on 5/14/07.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 10,20,30 and 33-53.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☒ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. Claims 10, 20, 30 and 33-53 are allowed.
2. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.
3. Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Jennifer Reda on 06/05/2007.
4. The application has been amended as follow:

- a. At the end of page 21 (at the end of the BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS section:) in the SPECIFICATION.

Add the following sentence:

"Fig. 36 is a view showing an example of a mode of displaying warning information."

- b. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1 - 9 (Canceled)

Claim 10. (Previously Presented) An inventory management system that manages an inventory of an expendable, comprising:

a first storage unit, adapted to store inventory information indicating an inventory number of an expendable which is mounted in a printer and can be replaced, the inventory number being reduced based on replacement of the expendable in the printer;

a receiver unit, adapted to receive absence information indicating that the inventory number of the expendable is zero or less than a predetermined number;

an instruction unit, adapted to provide, to an external apparatus via a communication line, a delivery instruction for delivery of a new expendable;

a second storage unit, adapted to store history information indicating a history of the delivery instruction provided by said instruction unit; and

an alarm sending unit, adapted (i) to send an alarm to the external apparatus via the communication line if a new reception of the absence information is received by said receiver unit after said instruction unit provides the delivery instruction for delivery of the new expendable, and if the history information is present in said second storage unit, and (ii) not to send the alarm to the external apparatus if a new reception of the absence information is received by said receiver unit, and if the history information is absent in said second storage unit.

Claims 11 -19. (Canceled)

Claim 20. (Previously Presented) An inventory management control method that manages an inventory of an expendable, comprising the steps of:

storing inventory information indicating an inventory number of an expendable which is mounted in a printer and can be replaced, the inventory number being reduced based on replacement of the expendable in the printer;

receiving absence information indicating that the inventory number of the expendable is zero or less than a predetermined number;

providing, to an external apparatus via a communication line, a delivery instruction for delivery of a new expendable; and

storing in a storage unit history information indicating a history of the delivery instruction provided in said providing step; and

sending an alarm to the external apparatus via the communication line if a new reception of the absence information is received in said receiving step after the delivery instruction for delivery of the new expendable is provided, and if the history information is present in the storage unit, and not sending the alarm to the external apparatus if a new reception of the absence information is received in said receiving step, and if the history information is absent in the storage unit.

Claims 21 - 29. (Canceled)

Claim 30. (Currently Amended) A computer program stored on a computer-readable medium to be executed by an inventory management system that manages an inventory of an expendable, comprising the steps of:

storing inventory information indicating an inventory number of an expendable which is mounted in a printer and can be replaced, the inventory number being reduced based on replacement of the expendable in the printer;

receiving absence information indicating that the inventory number of the expendable is zero or less than a predetermined number;

providing, to an external apparatus via a communication line, a delivery instruction for delivery of a new expendable; and

storing in a storage unit history information indicating a history of the delivery instruction provided in said providing step; and

sending an alarm to the external apparatus via the communication line if a new reception of the absence information is received in said receiving step after the delivery instruction for delivery of the new expendable is provided, and if the history information is

Art Unit: 2155

present in the storage unit, and not sending the alarm to the external apparatus if a new reception of the absence information is received in said receiving step, and if the history information is not present in the storage unit.

Claims 31 and 32. (Canceled)

Claim 33. (Previously Presented) A system according to Claim 10, wherein the inventory information stored by said first storage unit can be monitored by an external apparatus.

Claim 34. (Previously Presented) A system according to Claim 33, wherein the inventory information can be monitored by a browser provided in the external apparatus, and said first storage unit is able to output display information enabling the browser to monitor the inventory information.

Claim 35. (Previously Presented) A system according to Claim 33, wherein said first storage unit stores the inventory information for each one of a plurality of expendable types, and the inventory information can be monitored for each expendable type by the external apparatus.

Claim 36. (Previously Presented) A system according to Claim 35, wherein said second storage unit stores the history information for each one of the plurality of expendable types so as to show that the delivery instruction has been provided for each expendable type, and wherein the inventory information can be monitored for each expendable type by the external apparatus.

Claim 37. (Previously Presented) A system according to Claim 36, further comprising an order reception unit adapted to receive an order for an expendable of any one of the plurality of expendable types from the external apparatus, wherein the external apparatus is provided with an order placement display screen having a plurality of order placement sections for respective ones of the plurality of expendable types and wherein each order placement section is activated or inactivated in accordance with the inventory number of expendable for a expendable type corresponding to the order placement section.

Claim 38. (Previously Presented) A system according to Claim 10, wherein the expendable is toner or ink.

Claim 39. (Previously Presented) A system according to Claim 10, wherein the absence information indicates that a remaining amount of an expendable is at a low level.

Claim 40. (Previously Presented) An inventory management control method according to Claim 20, wherein the stored inventory information can be monitored by an external apparatus.

Claim 41. (Previously Presented) An inventory management control method according to Claim 40, wherein the inventory information can be monitored by a browser provided in the external apparatus, and further comprising the step of outputting display information enabling the browser to monitor the inventory information.

Claim 42. (Previously Presented) An inventory management control method according to Claim 40, wherein the inventory information for each one of a plurality of

expendable types is stored, and the inventory information can be monitored for each expendable type by the external apparatus.

Claim 43. (Previously Presented) An inventory management control method according to Claim 42, wherein the history information for each one of the plurality of expendable types is stored so as to show that the delivery instruction has been provided for each expendable type, and wherein the inventory information can be monitored for each expendable type by the external apparatus.

Claim 44. (Previously Presented) An inventory management control method according to Claim 43, further comprising the step of receiving an order for an expendable of any one of the plurality of expendable types from the external apparatus, wherein the external apparatus is provided with an order placement display screen having a plurality of order placement sections for respective ones of the plurality of expendable types and wherein each order placement section is activated or inactivated in accordance with the inventory number of expendable for a expendable type corresponding to the order placement section.

Claim 45. (Previously Presented) An inventory management control method according to Claim 20, wherein the expendable is toner or ink.

Claim 46. (Previously Presented) An inventory management control method according to Claim 20, wherein the absence information indicates that a remaining amount of an expendable is at a low level.

Claim 47. (Previously Presented) A computer program according to Claim 30, wherein the stored inventory information can be monitored by an external apparatus.

Claim 48. (Previously Presented) A computer program according to Claim 47, wherein the inventory information can be monitored by a browser provided in the external apparatus, and further comprising the step of outputting display information enabling the browser to monitor the inventory information.

Claim 49. (Previously Presented) A computer program according to Claim 47, wherein the inventory information for each one of a plurality of expendable types is stored, and the inventory information can be monitored for each expendable type by the external apparatus.

Claim 50. (Previously Presented) A computer program according to Claim 49, wherein the history information for each one of the plurality of expendable types is stored so as to show that the delivery instruction has been provided for each expendable type, and wherein the inventory information can be monitored for each expendable type by the external apparatus.

Claim 51. (Previously Presented) A computer program according to Claim 50, further comprising the step of receiving an order for an expendable of any one of the plurality of expendable types from the external apparatus, wherein the external apparatus is provided with an order placement display screen having a plurality of order placement sections for respective ones of the plurality of expendable types and wherein each order placement section is activated or inactivated in accordance with the inventory number of expendable for a expendable type corresponding to the order placement section.

Claim 52. (Previously Presented) A computer program according to Claim 30, wherein the expendable is toner or ink.

Claim 53. (Previously Presented) A computer program according to Claim 30, wherein the absence information indicates that a remaining amount of an expendable is at a low level.

Reason for allowance

5. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: the prior art of record does not teach providing, an external apparatus via a communication line, a delivery instruction for delivery of a new expendable and sending an alarm to the external apparatus via the communication line if a new reception of the absence information is received in said receiving step after the delivery instruction for delivery of the new expendable is provided, and if the history information is present in the storage unit, and not sending the alarm to the external apparatus if a new reception of the absence information is received in said receiving step, and if the history information is absent in the storage unit in lights of other limitation described in independent claims 10, 20 and 30.
6. Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."
7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Liang-che Alex Wang whose telephone number is (571)272-3992. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.

Art Unit: 2155

8. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Saleh Najjar can be reached on (571)272-4006. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.
9. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free)..

Liang-che Alex Wang *lcw*
June 5, 2007


SALEH NAJJAR
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER